

REMARKS

Applicants respond hereby to the outstanding Office action of March 15, 2005. Applicants thank the Examiner for the allowance of claims 8 and 11. The amendment amends the Abstract and Specification, substantially in accordance with the Examiner suggestions at paragraph 3 of the Office Action, but makes no amendments to any of the claims.

Response To Rejections Under 35 USC § 102

Claims 1-6 and 9 have been rejected under 35 USC § 102(b) as anticipated by European Patent Application EP0549182 to Cline. The Examiner states that Cline discloses a method for visualizing a limited part of a 3D medical image-point-related data set, said method based on selectively suppressing a geometrically selected part of the data set and rendering an image based on any non-suppressed part of the data set (col. 2, lines 41-45, col. 4, lines 8-14, col. 2, lines 32-34),

said method being characterized in that said selected part comprises a first selection containing all points associated to a nearer region with respect to a first clipping plane (set of model cut planes 206, fig.2) and moreover all points associated to a farther region with respect to a second clipping plane (set of model cut planes 206, fig.2), respectively, thereby making the rendered image being based on an intermediate region between said first clipping plane and said second clipping plane (col. 4, lines 29-49).

Applicants respectfully disagree for at least the following reasons.

Applicants' independent claim 1 sets forth a method for visualizing a limited part of a 3D medical image-point-related data set. The method is based on selectively suppressing a geometrically selected part of the data set and rendering an image based on any non-suppressed part of the data set, and further characterized in that the selected part comprises a first selection containing all points associated to a nearer region with respect to a first clipping plane and moreover all points associated to a farther region with respect to a second clipping plane, respectively, thereby making the rendered image being based on an intermediate region between said first clipping plane and said second clipping plane.

Applicants' independent claim 9 sets forth an apparatus for visualizing a limited part of a 3D medical image-point-related data set. The apparatus includes pickup means for deriving

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from a tissue object various two-dimensional information sets and being coupled to data processing means for therefrom generating a three-dimensional data set for displaying on a display facility coupled therewith, and selection means associated with said data processing means for selectively suppressing a geometrically selected part of the data set for subsequent rendering on said display facility of an image based on any non-suppressed part of the data set. The apparatus is further characterized in that the selection means are arranged for implementing a first selection containing all points associated to a nearer region with respect to a first clipping plane and moreover all points associated to a farther region with respect to a second clipping plane, respectively, thereby making the rendered image being based on an intermediate region between said first clipping plane and the second clipping plane.

In contrast, Cline teaches a graphics workstation for displaying 3D images from surface models generated by CAD software or 3D volumetric data. Cline includes a model clipping circuit to determine points, which are to be displayed, corresponding to a desired model clip box. At col. 4, lines 8-14, Cline discloses a surface generator 2 which creates a point and normal display list, comprising points (x, y, z) and normal vectors associated with each point (n_x, n_y, n_z) (memory stored). Applicants respectfully disagree that the Cline points and normal vectors are the equivalent to applicants' method of claim 1 or apparatus of claim 9, which method and apparatus are based on selectively suppressing a geometrically selected part of the data set and rendering an image based on any non-suppressed part of the data set.

While Clines' Fig. 2 shows a set of model cut planes 206, applicants respectfully disagree that same are equivalent to applicants' claimed first selection, containing all points associated with a nearer region re a first clipping plane, and is equivalent to applicants' claimed points associated with a farther section with respect to a second clipping plane, and that Clines ability to actuate an object cut plane input device 40 to select a set of model cut planes 206 through a model 2 to be displayed to define a model clip box 208 can be equated with either of applicants claims 1 and 9. Moreover, Cline uses an X', Y', Z' model space to define the cut planes such that they always remain fixed re model 2 while the model is rotated, so while Cline may include an inversion input device to define inside and outside the clip box, such that screen cut planes remain fixed re a monitor screen 250, applicants respectfully state that same does not teach or disclose that the

selected part comprises a first selection containing all points associated to a nearer region with respect to a first clipping plane and moreover all points associated to a farther region with respect to a second clipping plane, respectively, thereby making the rendered image being based on an intermediate region between said first clipping plane and said second clipping plane, as set forth in claims 1 and 9.

Accordingly, applicants respectfully assert that independent claims 1 and 9 are not anticipated by the Cline, and request withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1 and 9 under 102(b) in view of same. For that matter, because claims 2-6 depend from independent claim 1, applicants respectfully assert that claims 2-6 are not anticipated under 102(b) in view of Cline, and request withdrawal of the rejections of claims 2-6 at least the reasons set forth for the patentability of claim 1.

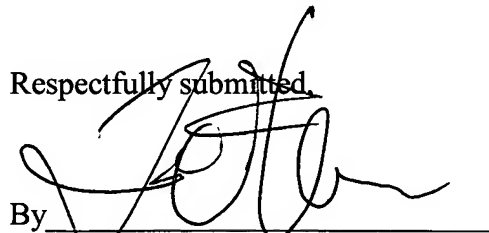
Response To Rejections Under 35 USC § 103

Claim 7 and 10 were rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as unpatentable over Cline in view of Stiel, et al., Digital Flashing Tomosynthesis: A Promising Technique For Angiocardigraphic Screening ("Stiel").

Because claims 7 and 10 depend from independent claims 1 and 9, respectively, as distinguished from Cline above, applicants respectfully assert that claims 7 and 10 are not obvious under 103(a) by Cline in view of Stiel for at least the reasons set forth for the patentability of claims 1 and 9, and respectfully requests withdrawal of the claims 7 and 10 rejections under 103(a) by said combination, therefor.

Accordingly, applicants respectfully assert that claims 1-7, 9 and 10 are distinguishable over the art of record, and request that all of the art rejections be withdrawn, and the application pass to issue, including each of claims 1-11.

Respectfully submitted,


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